

AGENTS OF CHANGE: KUMAR MANGALAM BIRLA

In India, the word 'Birla' is synonymous to inheriting enormous wealth. Kumar Mangalam Birla, one of India's young successful entrepreneurs is the Chairman of the Aditya Birla Group, country's leading diversified business conglomerate. Kumar features as the eighth youngest billionaire outside India according to the Fortune magazine

At the young age of 28, he took charge of the group which his father, Aditya Vikram Birla had grown in to an Indian Multinational through 19 companies outside India, in Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia, the Philippines and Egypt.

When Kumar took charge after the untimely demise of his father, there was skepticism about whether he would succeed in handling the empire, considering his inexperience and shy nature that was read as lack of aggression. During the last 11 years, Kumar Mangalam Birla has not only managed the business successfully, but transformed it from being a low-performance complacent conglomerate to a modern high performance group which has achieved leadership in most of its business domains. The Group's operations extend to Canada, China, the U.S., the U.K, Germany, Hungary and Australia as well.

He has scaled up the turnover of Aditya Birla Group to \$9.7 billion or Rs. 43,000 crore from Rs. 8,000 crore (\$1.7 billion) in 1995. Today, the group is world's top viscose staple fibre producer, world's fourth largest producer of insulators, fourth largest producer of carbon black, eleventh largest cement producer, fourth largest aluminium producer in Asia and the largest single location custom copper smelter.

Last year he succeeded in gaining full control over Idea Cellular, the fifth largest mobile operator of India, buying out the stake of joint venture partner and India's largest industrial conglomerate Tata Group after a prolonged tussle. The group has presence in business process outsourcing (BPO), Life Insurance and Asset Management, branded garments and fertilizers also.

The group companies of Aditya Birla Group include Grasim Industries Ltd, Hindalco Industries Ltd, UltraTech Cement Ltd, Aditya Birla Nuvo Ltd and Idea Cellular Ltd. The group's Joint ventures include Birla Sun Life (Financial Services).

Kumar is credited with bringing a cultural change in one of the oldest and largest business empires of India. Although the ownership structure of the group is still family-centric, professionals have taken charge at the helm of different businesses. It's often questioned whether Kumar Mangalam has acted as a custodian of Birla legacy or a catalyst of change. In fact, he has been successful on both the counts.



Kumar Mangalam Birla
Chairman, The Aditya Birla Group

Professional Profile:

- Started getting involved in the family business even as a college student
- Got his first assignment at Hindalco's Renukoot plant in the north Indian state of Uttar Pradesh after completing his management studies in London
- Took charge of the group as chairman, after his father's untimely demise because of prostate cancer in October 1995
- Director of the Central Board of Directors of the Reserve Bank of India, India's central bank
- Member of the Prime Minister of India's Advisory Council on Trade and Industry
- Member of the National Council of the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII), the premier industry chamber of India representing more than 90,000 Indian companies
- Member of the Apex Advisory Council of the Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry of India (ASSOCHAM)
- Awarded "The Ernst & Young Entrepreneur of the Year — India" in 2005, an award presented by Ernst & Young, among the top 6 global accountancy and professional services firm
- Member of the Organising Committee for Commonwealth Games, Delhi 2010

Academic Profile:

- Chartered Accountant
- MBA (Masters in Business Administration) from the London Business School, London

Personal Profile:

- Age: 39 years, Born on June 14, 1967
- Married to Neerja
- Kumar Mangalam and Neerja have three children, Anyashree, Aryaman Vikram and Advaitesha